763 A gunshot today most likely signals the death of a hunter or the father of a hunter. In any case, however, there are always cries and vociferations by [165] the women, who are joined by their friends, relatives, and neighbors.

Horsemen ride off to notify any of the sons of the deceased who are away.

[567] Meanwhile, the chief of the slaves, the major-domo, the confidential agent, or a friend or neighbor of the deceased goes to inform the chief and the principal men in the village.

764 These personages come to the mortuary house at once, spear in hand. After being received by the man temporarily in charge of the house, they go to the deceased to discover his identity and at the same time express their condolences to the family represented by the person who received them; then they withdraw.

In the mortuary hut silence descends while the women prepare the body. They wash it with warm water usually [824] scented with basil, su-ko-la (Ocimum album and febrifugum); they dry it and wrap it in pieces of native white cotton material or else dress it in its own garments, likewise white. A mat [285] of coarse straw (tyekala, kara) is placed in the middle of the room. A fine, flexible mat made of iphène leaves is put on top of it, and the women lay out the corpse on the second mat. Sometimes they place a grindstone on the abdomen to keep it from swelling.

When these preparations are completed, the women, [352] dressed in white native cloth, sit down in the native fashion on [516] tiny stools in the mortuary hut. Those who come in from outside give evidence of terrible grief: they cry out, they weep, [152] they cover their heads with a bit of cloth and hurry toward the mortuary hut. As soon as they enter, they become quiet and stop weeping.

152 Among the Bambara grief is never silent; it is customary to show it overtly. As soon as there is a crowd, the singing 764 begins, in rhythm to the clapping of hands. One person or 767 another will be inspired to sing of the achievements and virtues of the deceased. Professional weepers and mourners mingle with the crowd, guiding and gradually encouraging the noisy display.

794 At dusk on the day selected, the clergy proceeds with the great-
796 est pomp to the Kore-tu (grove of the Kore). The orchestra, composed of drums (denu-ba), bells (kinge), and gourds (nkude), leads the procession. Then come the high priest (Kore-tigi) and the kara-ma, "people of the plank of the dead" (kara), which one of them carries. Finally comes the dense crowd, motley and noisy, of wara-u, Kor-dyuga, bisa-tyi-la, ta-tugu-la-n-tigi, and ngoni-sa-ma.

Everyone is performing his role. The masked men imitate the beasts they represent; the costumed Kor'dyuga act like clowns; the flagellants make their switches hiss. Thus the crowd approaches the Kore-tu amidst a great din, but only the clergy may enter it. The bearer of the kara takes his place under the sacred tree. On orders from the Kore-tigi, silence falls for the reception of the Kore-de postulants.

The latter form a line facing the tree and the kara. They
● [516] prostrate themselves in the dust for the duration of the sacred hymn of the Kore, which begins with the words, "Dyante Kore de-u." When they rise, they are dyante-ma-u, "affiliates."

The members thus admitted remain in the sacred grove for 15 days and are not allowed to return to the village. There they are instructed by the "elders." Then they are assigned to the different groups of wara; theoretically, an eldest son enters the group to which his father belongs, while the rest of the sons may choose whichever group they prefer. In addition to his duties during ceremonies, each wara has a certain job: the hyenas (suruku) guard and patrol the sacred grove and question the inquisitive to learn whether they are members (dyante ma); the Kore-duga see to the maintenance of the grove, clearing its environs in order to guard against the grove's being damaged by brush fires.

794 The offerings and the sacrifices, and then the communion
796 repast, follow the ceremony of admission and are accompanied
786 and followed by dancing and singing. The orgy then goes on for several days, as long as food remains. The various groups assemble for their dances, and the ta-tugu-la-n-tigi start the proceedings. With a flaming torch [283] in each hand, they chase each other, singe each other's backs and chests, and in the

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778 peculiarity of this fetish that it continues to live in its hourglass as
778 long as a particle of this object remains.

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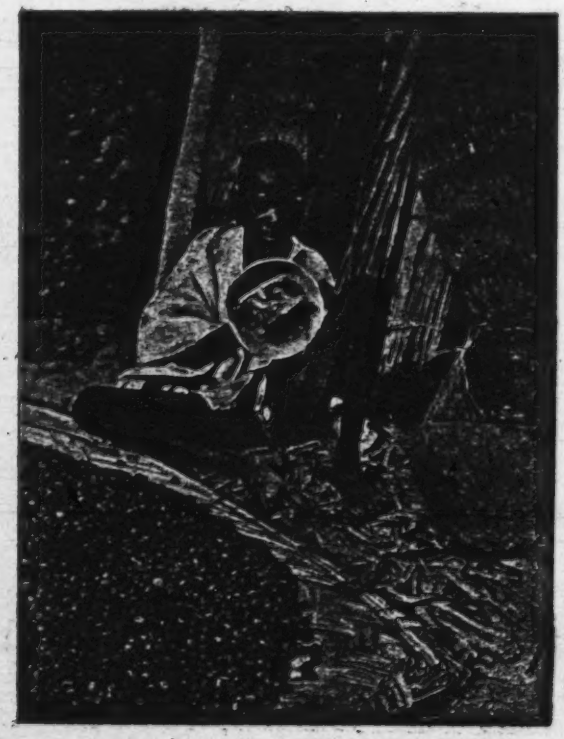

Young Bambara holding the sinsin, the fetish of twins

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778 This fetish protects the mother of the twins, and unites the latter
431 in such close affection that one never receives a gift without sharing it with the other. I would even go so far as to say that it is in good taste never to offer anything to one without offering as much to the other, and when they are given something, the first to be favored is the last born, who is considered by everyone as the older.

Such a spirit is the exclusive property of one family, and even bears its name, or diamou. Its sacrificer, called gnéna-n-sonnaba, also bears the name of dougoutigi (1); he is, in fact, the real head of

1. Gnena, "fetish," "genie"; sonnaba, "great sacrificer"; dougou, "village"; tigi, "head," "master."

Typical Bambara headman.

the village. Although at present the civil and religious authorities are separate in many places, the gnéna-n-sonnaba, or religious priest, always holds precedence, and self-respecting people call him dougoutigi (head of the village), giving the title of sotigi (2) to the

2. So, "hut," "house"; tigi, "head."

one who has only civil authority. Here we have further evidence that the organization of the Bambara nation was, at its origin purely religious. The separation of the two authorities in certain hamlets can easily be understood.

Under the Bambara dynasty the kingdom of Ségou was divided into provinces, cantons, and villages. The king, Fama or Massa

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1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

[516]

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At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

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The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

4: Henry--265 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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The Ségou bank of the Niger.

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4: Henry--271 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

Left: Souba (monkey), society of the Koré. Above: Denouba (the big drum) and kinge (a triangle), society of the Koré. Center: Head korodouga and his herald, society of the Koré. Right: Souroukou (hyena), society of the Koré.

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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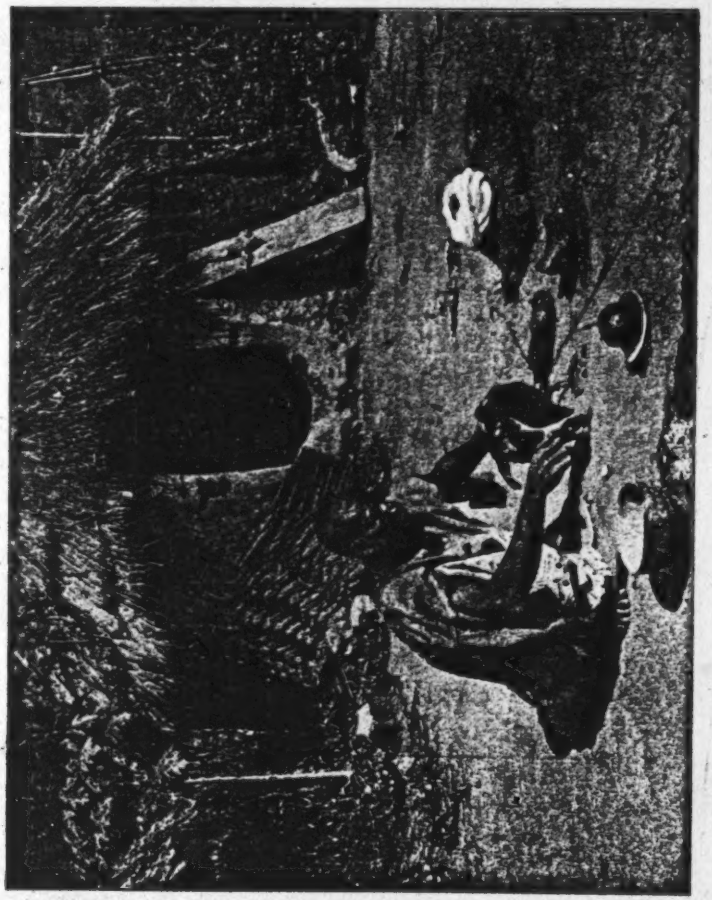

Sacrifice of a hen to the "family boli."

4: Henry--287 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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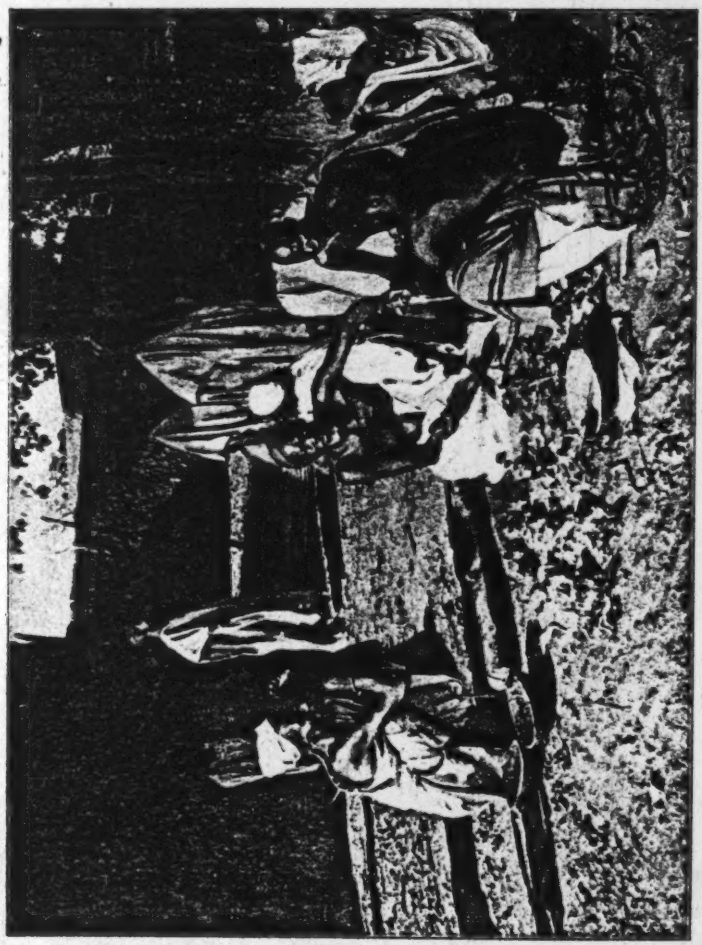

After the sacrifice: division of the sacred meats.